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ABSTRACT

Meaning constructs are aspects of a person's cultural worldview. They are those aspects that philosophers often write about as a means by which to make sense of the world. Teachers carry their worldviews and meaning constructs into the classrooms with them. Similarly to teachers, reflective teaching proponents hold meaning constructs that are embedded in their proposals. If teaching change is desired, in structures and in standards, then the constructs underlying reflective theories ought to point in reformist directions. The relation between reflective teaching and meaning constructs is examined in order to find the philosophical connection. This is set out in two parts, the first being an overview of philosophy today a knowledge of which is necessary in order to understand the second, a look at meaning. Four possible meaning constructs are proposed. Two can be identified as modern/epistemological and two as postmodern/postepistemological. A postmodern perspective is adopted since holding the spectators' view, in its functional/essentialist statement, means recognition of no other meaning form. (Contains 65 references) (KM)

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MEANINGS AND REFLECTIVE TEACHING

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MEANINGS AND REFLECTIVE TEACHING

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> We are in a sense surrounded by meaning: in the words we exchange, in all the signs we deploy, in the art, music, literature we create and enjoy, in the very shape of the man-made environment most of us live in, and not least, in the internal speech we rarely cease addressing to ourselves silently, or to absent others (Taylor, 1985c, p. 248).

Meaning, from what can be called a philosophic perspective, can inform theories of teachers personal theorizing. This is the general purpose of the chapter, established more specifically by the following theses:

(1) How we construe meaning is endemic to our culture. It is part of the culture and also foundational in the process of enculturation. We learn meaning: we invent meaning (Platts, 1979, p. 1). Education is necessary for enculturation that may or may not be fostered by teaching. Teaching has its own meaning that is itself enculturated. Part of the meaning of teaching are systematically developed "theories of teaching."

(2) Broad explanations of culture are humanly invented and historically evolving. At any one time, diverse cultural "worldviews" are possible and present (Van Manen, 1977, p. 211). Moreover memories of past views remain as part of present views. Aspects of worldviews are psychically encapsulated as "meaning constructs." These serve as a shorthand, a synthesis, an image, a placeholder for the process of sensemaking: They tell us how we take or make the world (Goodman,

1978).[1] They tell about reality and personhood and they give particular slants on matters of truth, beauty and goodness. They have a lot to do with how we consider change.

(3) Within established theories of teaching, a tradition of teachers personal theorizing is growing. Within it and distinguished from other, older models of "research on teaching" are theories of "reflective teaching." They differ from theories on instruction, from studies of teaching effects, and even from bodies of research on teacher thinking, decision-making and planning (See Wittrock, 1986). They aim to reform teaching practice by reconceptualizing the central place of the teacher in classroom life.

(4) Teachers, as all others persons, hold embedded meaning constructs. They are largely unexamined but have a relationship to how teaching is practiced: how one sees the world is an influence. "Reflective teaching" theories contain implicit constructs as well. These ought to be examined. If proposals are to be reformist, to promote educational change in relation to cultural change, the meaning constructs ought themselves to contribute. While constructs may be diverse, there ought not to be incommensurable contradictions.

In the chapter that follows the definitions of and relations between reflective teaching and meaning constructs are examined. In the next section, "reflective teaching" is introduced. This is followed by two parts that set out the philosophical connection: one is an overview of philosophy today that is necessary in order to understand the second one, a look at "meaning." Finally four meaning constructs are described and illustrated in reflective teaching proposals.

Introducing Reflective Teaching

Recent theorizing about "reflective teaching" has taken place in response to a decade-old basics movement in teacher education (Eisner, Forward, in Connelly and Clandinin, 1988). Reactions are strong to inadequate conception of good, i. e. effective teaching, to dominating attention on instruction as it "causes" learning, to the generalized disempowerment of teachers (e.g. Zeichner and Liston, 1987, p. 40). What is missing, say reflective proponents, is both placing the teacher in the theoretical center of classrooms and recognizing the value of the personal and the particular in understanding what transpires there. What is also missing are systematic considerations by teachers about their practice as part of the construction of their own personal theoretical views.

Related to this general negative reaction, reflective theorists share three common beliefs. The first is a rejection of a prevalent "scientism" in educational research. Gary Fenstermacher (1986) has well identified this science of teaching (read research) as the previously dominant aim of finding "causal regularities, law-like generalizations, predictability, and near-perfect confirmation" of the teaching process, i.e the teaching-learning event (p. 42). Out of what is a misunderstanding of recent modern science, research that seeks narrow and limiting teleologies cannot take into account many aspects of teaching.[2] Among these are elements of teacher will and purpose, the complexities of activities like curriculum planning, the significance of the moral and aesthetic dimensions of the endeavor, and the influence of the socio-historic context.

Agreed about secondly is valuing of the general "qualification" of educational research over the past decade or so. Various qualitative methodologies are becoming standard within research on teaching. These

include classic ethnographies, briefer case studies and on-going action research. Also developing is a tie between research on teaching and classroom-curriculum evaluation studies.[3] In both domains this means an infusion of new theory from anthropology, sociology and policy studies as well as from curriculum studies and sociology of knowledge. New methods for data gathering have occasioned new media for reporting research results. Among these are descriptive accounts of observations and interviews that incorporate teachers own discursive reflections about their practice.

The third commonality is a shared link to what one theorist calls the presence of "the ghost of John Dewey" (Grimmett, in Grimmett and Erickson, 1988, p. 6). Dewey is cited as contributing several generalized concepts that appear across most of the reflective theories: experience, inquiry or problem-solving and reconstruction (e.g. Connelly and Clandinin, 1988; Henderson, 1989). These are often reformulated as part of a common definition of reflective teaching. Richert (1987a) writes that it is "the process by which teachers look back upon their work to learn from their experience"(p. 1). To this, others add specific Deweyan components. One is the problematic situation that bounds reflective activity (Grimmett citing Schon, in Grimmett and Erickson, 1988, p. 8; further cited by Henderson, 1989a, "Chapter four," p. 10). Another is the systematic and continuous rebuilding of experience (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988, p. 81; Henderson, 1989a, "Chapter one," p. 7). Third is reflective action (as distinct from routine action) defined by Zeichner and Liston (1987) as "the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief...in light of the grounds that support it and the consequences to which it leads"(p. 24). Reflective theorists also make connections to each other through the

Deweyan link. Chief among these is to the work of Donald Schon and his many references to Dewey--to learning by doing, the artistry of practical action, and a sharing of community norms (e.g. Schon, 1987, pp. 311-313). Finally Dewey's ghost is felt even in reflective models in which he is not directly mentioned as a philosophical base. An example is found in Fenstermacher's (1986) rationale for the practical argument. Although grounded in Aristotle (Green, 1976), the spirit of Dewey is seen in the applicability of scientific research programs for improved teaching, the conception of teacher as inquirer, and the premise of education as normative (p. 41).[4] (See Fenstermacher, 1987b, p. 414; 1988, pp. 40-41; also, Shulman, 1988)

The three common beliefs tell us something about the philosophic orientation of the reflective theorists and they do provide possible hints to meaning constructs.[5] But because theirs are models of practice, philosophic substantiation is not greatly detailed. Saliently, while the references to Dewey may be insightful, they cannot tell us how these theories fit with meanings of a post-Deweyan world. These are theories for today--and they propose teaching reform for tomorrow. Both connections to Dewey and other philosophic beliefs ought to be tied to meanings of the cultural present. Descriptions of meaning constructs provide some understanding of present beliefs.

To close this introduction, I need now to identify the proponents of reflective teaching whose theories serve as the chapter exemplars.[6]

(1) In Canada, Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin (1985; 1988; also Clandinin, 1985) discuss reflection in terms of "personal practical knowledge" particularly as it takes the form of narrative accounts of curriulum practice.

(2) Also from Canada, theorists at several universities adopt and adapt Schon's (1983; 1987; 1988) notion of "reflective practitioner" as their research model. Included are contributions from Hugh Munby and Thomas Russell (Munby and Russell, 1989; Munby, 1987; 1989; Russell, 1987) and from Peter Grimmett and Gaalen Erickson (Grimmett and Erickson, 1988; Grimmett, 1988).

(3) In the United States, Gary Fenstermacher (1986; 1987a; 1987b, 1988) proposes a form of reflection called a "practical argument" with its conceptual roots in the writings of Thomas Green (1976).

(4) There also, two theorists see Nel Noddings (1984) concept of caring as a central element of reflection. These are James Henderson (1989a; 1989b) and Anna Richert (1987a; 1987b; 1988a; 1988b; undated). Richert also ties her work to that of Lee Shulman (1986) and his theory of "content knowledge in teaching." Henderson's model is more ideologically critical and concerned with postmodern orientations in curriculum inquiry.

Philosophical Situating

In the next section, concepts of meaning and "meaning construct" are introduced. To make sense (meaning) of them requires some philosophical situating, particularly with regard to the present state of the discipline.

At best, philosophy in both Anglo-America and on the Continent is described as changed and changing (Rorty, 1979; 1982b; Bernstein, 1986). Terms of change are variously applied: from positivism to postpositivism, from epistemological to postepistemological, from modernist to postmodernist.[7] Prior to turning to each of these, a founding outlook is helpful. Richard Bernstein (1983) writes that the present crisis in

philosophy is part of a broad intellectual debate between objectivism and relativism. One a personal level (Stone, 1987, p. 190) this is a conflict between the need for permanent metaphysical anchors (a foundation to life's meaning) and the lack of such need (usually seen as impossible). On a theoretical level, the call from one side is for monolithic, transcultural and universal standards and the response from the other side is for pluralistic, culture-specific, internal norms.[9]

(a) Positivist philosophy signals the dominant interest in science in the twentieth century.[10] A key figure was Hans Reichenbach who defined positivism as attempting to find solutions to "problems arising out of the activity and results of the natural sciences" (Rorty, 1982b, p. 211). Importantly, positivists disagreed over the foundation of empirical or logical methods, an argument taken up by analytic philosophers. One of the results of postivist hegemony was the pull of philosophy away from its traditional intellectual home in the humanities. Because methods were used similar to those of logicians and mathematicians, other processes of inquiry were discredited. No longer did Anglo-American philosophers read the Romantic humanists, John Dewey and Alfred North Whitehead,[11] nor "idealist speculators" from the Continent. This resulted both in a movement of Continental theories into other university departments and in a decided decline in interest within Philosophy in history, in literature, and in social theory in general.[12]

The question of social theory was especially problematic for the positivists as they attempted to determine the relationship of the natural to the social sciences. As an answer, a theory of "unified science" developed in which an intellectual hierarchy was defined with physics and mathematics on the top and the "human sciences" far below. The considered

(7)

view was that the social sciences were immature natural sciences differing only in degree of methods and standards (Bernstein, 1983, p. 35).

Most simply put, postpositivism means a new conception of the relationship of the natural to the social sciences and a changed view of what constitutes "the doing of science." Even though the debate continues, much subjectivity has been infused into scientific aims for objectivity. There is talk of the "rhetorics" of both--and even of the social sciences as "paradigmatic."[13]

(b) Charles Taylor (1988) identifies the epistemological aim in philosophy as the search to clarify "what made knowledge claims valid, and what ultimate degree of validity...[to lay] claim to" (p. 465). This was the theoretical need to define "justified true belief." We turn to truth shortly, first a look at belief, i. e. the mental content of knowledge.

Throughout most of western history, a picture of belief (knowledge) was put forth as an internal "representation" of an external reality. To capture this, Richard Rorty (1979) explains, there developed the cultural metaphor of the mind's eye seeking evidence of and justification for ideas, perceptions, images and the like. In classical times, the theory was that the immaterial mind (through reason) came to share identity of form or "idea" with the material world. In the Scholastic period, form became a sign from God--a theory that dominated down to the beginning of the modern era in the seventeeth century. Still working from the occular metaphor, two formulations replaced the spiritual description, both relating science to knowledge. One of these was empiricist in which the epistemic source turned to reality: through perception, the external world imposed its "impressions" upon the glassy essence of the internal mind. The other of these was rationalist in which the epistemic source turned

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personally inward: mind reflected upon itself as a mirror of nature and realized the image of the outside world.

Central to epistemology was truth that functioned as the basic normative frame; it was an objectivist ideal. Until relatively recent times, the philosophical task was to "believe more truths...by knowing most about Truth" (Rorty, 1982a, p. xv). Truth as standard came right out of and continued from the Platonic inception. In modern form, two theoretical alterations were significant. The first was that truth was only propositional (Rorty, 1979, p. 142). The second was that much debate always concerned which propositional formulations were "genuine." Genuine or true statements were knowledge (i.e. justified or judged so) and all others were something else like opinion or emotion.

To complete the epistemological picture and move to the problem of modernism, one other element requires attention. Implied above in the centrality of truth propositions is the major role of language in all branches of twentieth century philosophy (and intellectual life more broadly). This meant

> not only...to be concerned with language as one of the <u>problems</u> of philosophy, but also...[to be] <u>linguistic</u>, in that philosophical understanding is essentially bound up with the understanding of the medium of language (Taylor, 1985a, p. 215).

In a postepistemological view, language replaces knowledge as basic: witness the dominant talk of speech acts and truth conditional correlations, of deconstruction of language practices and of the perpetuation of hierarchical discourse-power relations (see Cherryholmes, 1988). As Rorty (1982a) sums the point, "Can we see ourselves as never

encountering reality except under a chosen description..."(p. xxxix)?

Accepting the postepistemological perspective may mean the "end of philosophy."[14] Surely it means the following: giving up a belief in "a priori knowledge and self-evident givenness, in necessity and certainty, in totality and ultimate foundations" (McCarthy, in Baynes, Bohman and McCarthy, 1988, p. 7); in re-conceptualizing the discipline as a study of the advantages and disadvantages of the various ways of talking which our race has invented (Rorty, 1982a, p. xl); and in moving beyond the opposition between objectivism and relativism (Bernstein, 1983).

(c) The dominance of language takes a different slant in modernist-postmodernist theorizing. A new centrality of subjectivity has emerged based in notions of rationality and personhood: i. e. of the "language animal." We begin with modern man (sic) as objectivist and with his story captured in the following narrative:

> The rule of consensus between sender and addressee of a statement with truth value...deemed acceptable if it is cast in terms of a possible unanimity between rational minds...(Lyotard, 1988, p. 73).

This sounds familiar given our look at the epistemological project. Furthermore, Jean-Francois Lyotard (1988) explains that it is only one modernist story--others include the hermeneutics of meaning (of an agreed standard through textual interpretation), the creation of wealth (in western capitalism), and the emancipation of humanity (under liberal democracies). All function as grand tales told as "truth."

The postmodern person recognizes the limitation of the modern viewpoint as well as the present state of ferment (Bohman, in Bayne, Bohman and McCarthy, 1988, p. 67). She desires to change the distancing

(10)

abstraction of the grand narratives and seeks instead localized accounts. Through pluralistic, historically contextualized and timely "theorizing," a new person is constructed who is not essentialist, instrumentalist or atomistic (Taylor, 1988, pp. 471-472; see Rorty, 1989). In Bernstein's (1983) terms, wiped away is the Cartesian anxiety of man always searching for knowledge that he could not know and connection to others that he could not have. What she has instead is an ambiguous postepistemological holism, one that arises naturally out of social-linguistic activity--and of sensemaking understood in these terms (Rorty, 1979, p. 170).

Meaning and Meaning Constructs

Given backgrounds of theories of reflective teaching and of the current philosophic era in which they are proposed, it is now appropriate to turn to the central concepts of this chapter, of meaning and meaning construct. An initial point about meaning is made by Cleo Cherryholmes (1988). This is that "meaning" has been taken as a logical primitive, as undefinable beyond one apparent (at least dominant) usage. In both positivist and postpositivist educational philosophy, meaning is that which is applied to designative/connotative "referents" of individual terms (Barrow, 1981, pp. 6-7), or in their combination as "the meaning of statements, claims and judgments" (Coombs, 1986, p. 2). (See also Wilson, 1963). Here there is a correlation of objects: words to concepts, instances and cases to propositional terms, and finally inferential relations among sentences.[15] Of course this use of meaning has been and is significant theoretically: we do need to be clear about language usage. But, Cherryholmes (1988) continues:

> It is intuitively appealing to think one must pay sole attention to a word or utterance if one is to

determine what that word or utterance means (p. 58).[16] Such an intuition (as we see from the previous section) seems to square with modernist desires for foundation and certainty and with the traditional essentialist quest. A particular meaning of meaning is indicated here but others may be possible.[17]

Two other possiblities are found in the writings of Philip Phenix (1964) and Jerome Bruner (1985). These provide contrast to the dominant use and suggest that meaning is not a logical primitive. Phenix claims a general usage in the aim of education. One learns "realms of meaning," that is, encapsulations of essential patterns that order "the possible distinctive modes of human understanding" (p. 6). These are logics of experience that go beyond recognized forms of knowledge (see Hirst, 1974) to include symbolization, and feeling and a kind of cognitive integration (p. 20).[18] At one point, Phenix likens his realms of meaning to ways of knowing. This is close to the terminology employed by Bruner (1985) as he describes two "natural" modes of thought that are not reducible. One of these, called narrative by him, provides "the meaning of experience" (pp. 97-98) and contrasts to scientific or "paradigmatic" thinking.[19]

Given these three meanings of meaning, we turn now to the definition given by Taylor (1985a)--a fourth possibility:

> [H]ow is that that these segments of a medium that we deploy when we talk, make music...build...objects, how is it that these say something?.... What is it that we see in things when we understand them as signs which we do not when we fail to apprehend them as such.... [Furthermore] here we are talking about the significance things have for us in virtue of our goals

(12)

aspirations, purposes (p. 218)

In the present exploration I take this as a first element of the term "meaning construct." Meaning is herein stipulated as a broad notion of signification.[20] The second element comes from Cherryholmes (1988) and from Lee Cronbach and Paul Meehl. They define "construct" as a postulated attribute of persons that is a construal of experience into potentially "testable" categories (p. 99). Significantly, while "identity" serves as the measure of construct validity for Cronbach and Meehl, I take it as only one possible kind of postulation of attributes.[21]

Neither Taylor nor Rorty uses the term "meaning construct," but I believe they offer substantiation for the idea in broad theories of meaning. First, Taylor (1985c) writes of two historically constituted theories of meaning that have analogues for him in models of persons (1985b). Here the notion of "attribution" is found: In the first model, person is defined by a performance attribute, that of consciousness that can form representations. However, recognition of the second meaning theory alters the first attribution--and performance is reduced to appearance itself. In the second form, a new attribution surfaces, that of "mattering itself" (p. 99). This means the attribution of purposes, desires, aversions that make up a person's point of view. It is this that constitutes the second model of personhood.

Rorty (1979) differs with Taylor over the specific constitution of the two theories of meaning but they do concur about the first "representations" form. The former also refers to point of view and makes several relevant comments: Historically, representational meaning formed "a set of images that inaugurated...[the modern] era of philosophy" (p. 113). It had the organizing force of a cultural tradition with its own

intellectual problems and forms of writing. It was a "cultural space" that was both constraining and confrontational, characterized by a tug-of-war between the mind and object (p. 315). Finally there is an additional hint of three possible meanings: "some...inquiries come up with propositions, some with narratives, and some with paintings" (Rorty, 1982a, p. xliii).

In sum, both Taylor and Rorty acknowledge the larger theoretical domains of meaning and the possiblity of their shorthand images encapsulated as meaning constructs. They write of these "theories of meaning" as creations of philosophers and I concur. But I also think that these constructions both arise out of and become part of the psyches of groups and individuals. If, as I believe, they are part of usually unexamined commonsense, how can I suggest their presence?

Meaning constructs function in the following four ways. First is as the metaphysical orientation that we all have--to beliefs about reality and mind and body and other persons and the relations among these. An example is the naive realist who emphatically clings to the belief that he "knows" what he sees. Second is as the social location that we and others ascribe to ourselves. Sandra Harding (1986) has well captured this as three categories of individual identity, division of labor and symbolic totemism. This is the influence of social categories of race, class and gender (and of course it relates to the first dimension). Third is as ideological stance, that is how we consider change in relation to the other two categories. Here the hegemony operates that we may or may not understand. Fourth is language competence. Taylor (1985c) writes of three accomplishments: it articulates or brings into focus what matters (p. 252); it defines public space or the "common vantage point by which we survey the world" (p. 259); and it helps name our "characteristically

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novice teacher responses, Richert (1987a; 1987b) includes the voices of her informants and we have possible access to their meaning constructs. Hints of a spectator theory are found in mentions of truth seeking; stronger implications come in claims for individualized agency with

(15)

implicit notions of autonomous cause and effect. An illustrative journal entry raises the specter of the spectator:

> I am constantly thinking about how to reach the kids in my presentation of the material, how to create a situation where the kids are doing some <u>cool</u> (emphasis added) learning and thinking (p. 9)

In contrast to the open form of writing advocated by Richert, Fenstermacher proposes more structured reflection in the setting out of argument premises. He desires a "reasonably coherent chain of reasoning leading from the expression of some desired end state, through various types of premises to an intention to act in a particular way" (1988, p. 41). In this analysis of "truth premises," he knows that general prescriptions placed on top of particular classroom events invites spectator meaning--and I believe he wishes to avoid this. It is still possible, however, through the reductive form and the hidden curriculum of an argument.[23] A point to make here is that the meaning constructs of reflective proponents need not be understood nor adapted by persons who study and work from the proposals. For most of us, meaning constructs are deeply engrained and incommensurable contradictions are not recognized.

(b) <u>Manifestive meaning</u>: Taylor (1985a) claims a long history for manifestive or "expressive" meaning that pulls in an opposite metaphysical direction from that of spectatorism. Here artistic subjectivity and the mystery and fluidity of language are valued. Manifestive meaning consists of the following ingredients: a given world controlled by the expressor, power-full subjectivity with meaning directly available to sight and the other senses, the public presence of gestalts of feeling, new forms enabling new feelings, new self-awareness and new social relations. Recent

formulation of manifestive meaning was the project of the Romantics of the last century. Taylor (1985a, p. 246) suggests that we in the west have been deeply touched by Romanticism. This is seen today in calls for personal fulfillment and surely in New Age mentality.[24]

While meaning in the first construct is seen over and against "something," i. e. idea or image, the point of the second construct is that meaning is "just there". In the illustrations that follow it is important to remember that manifestive meaning changes into something else any time there is something else "done with it", i. e. analysis, application, inference, recollection, reenactment.

Several examples are found in the reflective models. Given the centrality of feeling in Richert's theory, manifestive meaning is clearly possible. The forms of journal writing and of teacher portfolios (collections of teaching documents) encourage expression. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) are more specific in their call for expressive meaning, both in their reliance on stories and in particular "narrative tools". One of these is "picturing." This is the creation of mental imaginings of educational events in terms of sensory and emotional experience; "concepts" are also pictured in this way (p. 40). Another is the use of "metaphor" embedded within practice (not placed on top of it) that unifies a series of events through talk about them. Since the tool is used to foster description and not explanation, this is expressive meaning. Finally these authors characterize a "personal curriculum of teaching" in two terms, that of rhythm and unity. Here the aesthetic that summarizes feeling encapsulates a manifestive wholeness (Connelly and Clandinin, 1985, p. 192).

Henderson (1989a) also incorporates poetics as part of "expressive

inquiry." He renders a rich imaginary dialogue to illustrate; here is it cited briefly:

> Ken: For me, teaching is a battleground between an adult and a group of captive, restless children.
>
> Janis: I think that's too harsh an image. For me, teaching is like a roller coaster ride with lots of ups and downs (Chapter three, p. 6).

Several kinds of metaphors are recommended, among them synoptic terms, expressions of emotion ("chaos!"), applications of the senses, uses of homolies and references to literature. Henderson suggests that expressive reflection is fostered through a process called "clustering." In free mental association, natural metaphors emerge that can be developed into metaphoric themes (beginning p. 11).

In our move now to the last two meanings, brief comment about all four is appropriate. The first and even the second constructs have long-established places in western intellectual thought and in the cultural psyche: It is no wonder that meaning seems like one of them. In the earlier philosophic terms of this chapter, they are modern. The second two constructs are postmodern and herein they are necessarily suggestive. They too have intellectual histories but as yet these are not easy to pin down. We do not have long hindsight.[25]

Something of course can be still said theoretically about the contrasts of the second two to the first set. The latter are anti-foundationalist and anti-essentialist. They are both broadly contextualized and particularly situational, i.e. historically connected and socially located. In neither of them is there desire for control as knouledge. This is missing in their instantiated discourses, i. e. in the

constructs as practiced.[26]

(c) Conversive meaning. Rorty's (1979) hermeneutics comes close to the meaning of meaning that is conversive.[27] For him, the exemplar is ordinary conversation, i. e. lived action within the world. Here are found the following ingredients: the world as constructed, acting subjects with language as their medium, norms of the logic of talk, temporary unification only in "civility rather than by common goal" (p. 318), agreement hoped for in the location of similarity. In conversation, Rorty writes,

> we play back and forth between guesses about how to characterize particular statements or other events, and guesses about the whole situation, until gradually we feel at ease with what was hitherto strange (p. 319).

The only aim is for a tentative "successful" accomplishment of a practice, one based on acquaintance rather than on external standard. Importantly, while hope for agreement is sustained, it is never forthcoming in some finalized form.[28]

Given their reliance on reflection, conversive meaning is potentially present in all of the chapter exemplars.[28] For example, Connelly and Clandinin describe the inquiry of one teacher, "Stephanie," about her practice. Here conversations take place among the teacher, her colleagues and the researchers that constitute a social construction of shared meaning (1985, beginning p. 185; 1988, beginning p. 159). Connecting interactions are replicated both by Henderson and Richert. The former proposes "contributive inquiry" in which people "act in concert" (1989a, Chapter three, p. 19). One important application of this process is for teachers to work as peer supervisors. Peers collaborate in Richert's (1987a) use of

conversational dyads in which both general pedagogy and the teaching of subject matter are central topics (p. 25). In all three examples, teacher subjectivity and talk are key features--suggesting conversive meaning. However, each also defines the outcomes of conversation in knowledge terms. This raises three possibilities: the continued prominence of modern meaning, ambivalence toward meaning, or transistion between forms. I note that any or all of these conditions is common to individual instantiations of the meaning of meaning and should not be taken pejoratively.

In the theorizing of Liston and Zeichner (1989a), ambivalence about meaning may also be found. One senses the need for structure and foundation in their desire to tie teachers beliefs to existing "central educational traditions."[30] But, the following statement is also made:

> The goal...[of reflection on beliefs] is not a ...belief system absolutely free of ambiguity and contradiction (p. 10).

For Liston and Zeichner, conversation, in the form of action research, is the medium for inquiry among student teachers, cooperating teachers and university supervisors. While some aspects of this process are individualistic and perhaps not conversive, the construct is nonetheless indicated in two important ways: first in the continual attention to the particular contexts of action (p. 18), and second in emphasizing the initiating role of action for reflection and not the other way around (p. 19).

(d) Transformational meaning.[31] The meaning of the fourth construct is illusive and fuzzy and it is meant this way. Not only is it bound up with inadequate words (modern terms to get at postmodern meaning) but the meaning itself cannot and must not be pinned down. Its scent can be

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sniffed, its direction indicated; but this is all. As Cherryholmes (1988) remarks, "it is meaning dispersed and deferred" (p. 151). Moreover, as this chapter has indicated, tied to the question of meaning is the question of philosophy. Its question, the nature of a postpositivist, postepistemological, postmodern discourse, contains "some of the most important spiritual issues of our time" (Taylor, 1988, p. 485). Transformational meaning is construed spiritually; it is metaphysical in a broad sense. I offer here a brief sketch.

Transformational meaning is the radicalizing of postmodernism in which there is only language-in-action by intentional beings who undertake it. It builds on the linguistic turn, moving from recognition of the centrality of language and the speech community, to continuity in agreed sameness, to discontinuity of difference and diversity.[32] In Taylor's (1988) account, this means first a new notion of person: identity formed with the primacy of the will and engaged in self-critical reason (p. 483). Second, this means "self-making," a continual renewal of identity in the particular--given acceptance of the limitations and conditions of ourselves and our knowing (pp. 479-480). The following characteristics are found in transformational meaning: a world as fluid and forming, all persons as "others" in terms of difference, the centrality of particularity and pluralism, change as probable and conceived as all-possibility.[33] Transformational meaning brings with it an appreciation for and a living with the paradox of ambiguity, contradiction and non-neutrality (see Cherryholmes, 1988, p. 172). This means the postmodern commitment to a social order in which there are no "privileged" meanings or meaning makers (a priori, transcendentally or historically true or right). What we have is what we are as doers armed only with the guidance

of "norms of the day" (Rorty, 1979, p. 367).

The various theories of reflective teaching offer indications of and suggestions for the possibility of transformational meaning.[34] Schon's concept of "reflection-in-action" is potentially transformational although he does not frame it in postepistemological language. In their research, Munby and Russell (1989) utilize this concept to assist beginning teachers to deal with "situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflict" (p. 72, citing Schon, 1983, p. 50). Key for them is the idea of meaning "in-the-action" (p. 73). Part of this theory is "reframing" or seeing one thing as something else (Munby, 1989, p. 4), and its spirit is transformationally pluralistic and "contradictory."

Richert's (undated) model is potentially transformational in its recognition of the limitations of traditional epistemology and call for feminist theorizing. There is also present the element of meaning through saying (1988b, p. 2). Henderson cites directly the influences of neo-pragmatist and poststructural thinking for his theorizing (1989a). Two concepts seem especially transformational: these are critical skepticism and discursive fluidity (1989b). In both reflective models there is a healthy presence of postmodern diversity.[34]

The heuristic approaches of Richert and Henderson contrast somewhat to the those of the remaining chapter exemplars that are more systematic and more closely tied to particular traditions of inquiry. In their "critical" model--even with its adoption of Alasdair MacIntyre's concept of a "value-laden social practice"--Zeichner and Liston retain some elements of modernist structuralism. This is demonstrated in their attempt to keep teacher activism out of the classroom (Liston and Zeichner, 1987, p. 118). Also appearing structural is the separation that Connelly and Clandinin .

(1985) make between knowing theoretically and knowing practically. Furthermore, much of their research based in narrative inquiry is descriptive of the cultural/educational status quo rather than proposing broad change. This may well be a function of the meaning construct underlying "narrative." Finally, in his "scientific" inquiry, Fenstermacher too splits knowledge of theory and practice (e.g. 1987a). As he attempts to utilize premises of "contrary epistemic and axiological traditions" (p. 359), he proposes the influence of many mental "vectors" on the meaning and action of teaching. But, I wonder how far he wants to travel on the road to transformation.[35]

Conclusion

What are meaning constructs? As described in the foregoing chapter, they are aspects of the cultural worldviews that belong to each of us. They are those aspects that philosophers often write about--a shorthand, a synthesis, an image, a placeholder for how we make sense of the world. As "meanings of meaning" they encapsulate beliefs about reality, personhood, societal norms like goodness and change. They are part of our lived experience, perhaps talked about commonsensically, but largely unexamined in any systematic way.

What do meaning constructs have to do with teaching and with theories of reflective teaching? Teachers, of course, carry their worldviews (and meaning constructs) into classrooms with them. They are part of the belief structure underpining practice but generally they are not thought about (in reflection on teaching) or taught about (in actual teaching instances or in preservice/inservice education). However, they operate implicitly as part of teacher intent, planning, instruction, evaluation and the like. Similarly to teachers, reflective teaching proponents hold meaning

constructs that are embedded in their proposals. A significant point is this: if teaching change is desired (in structures and their standards) then the constructs underlying reflective theories ought to point in reformist directions.

In the chapter I have proposed four possible meaning constructs. Two have been identified as modern/epistemological and two as postmodern/postepistemological. For their presentation, I have necessarily adopted a postmodern perspective since holding the spectator view (in its foundational/essentialist statement) means recognition of no other meaning form. But, in setting out these four (just them and no others), I may also be "guilty" of essentialism. Not only does a philosophic perspective encourage this (in explanatory categorization) but the cultural pull of spectatorism remains strong (Rorty, 1989, p. 2). Of the first two constructs, historical explanation points to empirical presence (at least for dominant societal persons and groups). Of the third, this seems true also. The picture is a little more diffuse for the last construct. Its presentation in the chapter presents the most obvious contradiction because its meaning--its essence--is of no essence. In it are found contingency, ambiguity, pluralism and the paradox of particularity and non-neutrality. My demur: I do offer the notion of meaning construct in the spirit of speculation and I am mindful of my possible contradiction. For me and all others in the postmodern world--for reflective theorists and for teachers with whom we all work--this may be the only possible meaning of what we live.[36]

Footnotes

1. In this adaptation of Nelson Goodman's phrase, the point is that serious differences exist over being in the world for someone who passively takes it as given and for someone who actively makes it as forming.

2. Among the "reflective" proponents, the response to scientism concerns their disagreement over Schon's term of "Technical Rationality" and what both he and they mean by positivist science. See the reference list for the writings of Fenstermacher (1987a; 1987b; 1988), and related Munby (1987) and Russell (1987). Schon (1983; 1987) describes his term respectively beginning p. 338 and beginning p. 314. On this debate, see the discussion by Mark Selman (1988), pp. 179-180.

3. Many of the authors of chapters in this text have done graduate study and research in curriculum and evaluation rather than in "research on teaching."

4. In his now classic commentary on Dewey, Richard Bernstein (1960) notes several important connections between Dewey's philosophy and that of Aristotle (pp. 7; 33).

5. Shortly we will look at a significant shift in intellectual thought, particularly in philosophy. I believe that many of the reflective theorists share the widespread desire for new ways to think about their work in today's world. They want change and reform and their intuition has been to look to Dewey for ideas of doing this. Further, for some of them, e.g. Liston and Zeichner and Henderson, ideological proposals are philosophically rooted.

6. Many of the reflective theories are work in progress and I want to acknowledge the generosity of several of the authors who allowed me to

read and cite their most recent papers. In this regard I talked with Jim Henderson, Hugh Munby, Anna Richert and Ken Zeichner. I have not asked any of the theorists to detail their meaning constructs so what appears in the chapter is of my own making. I want also to mention the recent dissertation of Mary Lynn Hamilton that utilizes the work of Fenstermacher and the analysis in progress by Jana Noel.

7. "Structural" and "poststructural" is one other significant term applied to the changing intellectual traditions. Here language and subjectivity play a key role--and I have included them. I have worked from the writings of Anglo-American philosophers since I know that tradition better than the very important theory of the French structuralists and poststructuralists. See Linda Brodkey (1987) for a brief account and the significant book by Cleo Cherryholmes (1988). In making connection between the French tradition and American curriculum theory, Cheeryholmes sets out broad philosophic background. I recommend his very readable text and turn to it for my own purposes shortly.

8. An example among educational theorists is the on-going exchange between Denis Phillips (1983) and Elliot Eisner (1983).

9. The argument "deconstructs" as objectivists argue that relativists are "absolute" in their founding claim, and relativists counter that "unversals" are merely historically enduring entities.

10. In each of the categories used to describe philosophy, I have selected a central concept or two for these introductory purposes. Clearly there is more to positivism than an interest in science, but it is central. Given the complex history of the discipline, this illustrative "format" follows for the rest of the categories as well.

11. The continued allegience of educationists to Dewey has been one

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factor contributing to the low status of education departments and colleges in higher education institutions.

12. "Philosophy" is capitalized here in deference to Rorty who claims that the history of the discipline is one continuous tradition ending with positivist epistemology. Taylor disagrees by seeing alternatives throughout. Today, there remain entrenched followers of "the Tradition" who believe that their "analytic" methods and none others constitute the doing of philosophy.

13. Sandra Harding (1986) proposes a new unified science based in a feminist, postmodern formulation of the social sciences.

14. See the excellent collection of articles with helpful introductions, edited by Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman and Thomas McCarthy (1988).

15. Excellent accounts of postpositivist interest in language and meaning are by Baker and Hacker (1984), Harrison (1979) and Platts (1979).

16. Cherryholmes' (1988) message is that meanings of terms are themselves socio-historical constructions and their meaning is only grasped if one understands the larger context from which they come. Further, meanings of terms have only momentary reified form and this is as certain as meanings can be given their evolving character.

17. I recognize the awkwardness of the language but standard terminology does not well account for what I am trying to get at here. I am reminded by critical theorists and poststructuralists that as power operates through knowledge (and through meaning), the masking of underlying constructs may be just the intention of those who control. The most accessible critical statement on the control of hegemony is still Michael Apple's first chapter in Ideology and Curriculum (1979).

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18. As I understand Phenix's model, these are encapsulations of psychological processes and thus they differ from the syntheses of cultural worldviews defined shortly.

19. Bruner compares his mode of thinking to the "hermeneutics" of Rorty that we consider in the next section of the chapter. There seem to be some problems in doing this since at one point the latter writes that it is not "another way of knowing" (1979, p. 356). To my mind, Bruner is attempting to captu.e the cognitive differences in use of literal and figurative language and this is not in the spirit of Rorty's term. For him neither the talk of cognition nor knowledge is useful; for him also, hermeneutic inquiry compliments both science and art and replaces neither.

20. Nothing further here need be made of Taylor's references to symbols or purposes since he means them in a broad and not a technical sense.

21. The notion of "test" implies a traditional view of meaning that does not apply to other forms. Each form, however, has its own kind of accountability or coherence. I note that whatever term is used here carries with it a meaning form--there is no neutral standard (a point to which we return).

22. Modification is my term since the authors do not directly address their meaning of meaning. There do seem to be varying intuitions in these two views, itself interesting given both of their ties to Shulman's work. In her particular references to feminism, Richert (undated) does hint at some postmodernism. Fenstermacher is more cautious and is wary of facile moves to postpositivism that throw out the significant advances of positivist science (1987a, p. 358).

23. I suspect that Fenstermacher's form (the argument) has prompted some of the charge against him of technical rationality. In

non-sophisticated versions of sentence correspondence, a spectator view of knowledge is manifested.(See Russell, 1988, p. 374) Additionally, misinterpretation is the plight of all theorists. One can easily envision traditional "truthtelling" for Liston and Zeichner's (1989a) "giving of good reasons" (p. 5); or a Schon (1988) "coach" who foists his knowledge on his unwary students (p. 19).

24. Taylor writes that we live in an unhappy compromise of both meanings, often in extremes of crass scientism or an overly sentimentalized aesthetic.

25. On some postmodern accounts their "metanarratives" are not yet developed. This raises then the question of whether such stories are antithetical to the meaning forms. In a related point, since meaning constructs are found in the particular cultural psyches of all of us, they do not directly correspond to any philosophic theories (even perhaps in the minds of philosophers).

26. Thus there is no need to consider the relation of subject and object.

27. Rorty does not intend a traditional disciplinary hermeneutics since this is the attempt to interpret the "meaning" of one text on the basis of another (Rorty, 1979, pp. 320-321). The use of the term "meaning" is often associated with the Continental discipline.

28. Just as manifestive meaning disappears if something like analysis is done to it, so too conversive meaning is lost if any of its parts or its tentative conclusions are reified.

29. What I am seeking here is conversation in which mutual and reciprocal meaning is formed. Many forms of guided teaching do not entail this meaning if the teacher knows where the "dialogue" should end up. In

Schon's model, both the coach and the teacher may maintain spectator meaning. for the latter this comes in merely making explicit existing beliefs that are themselves searches for objectivism. But, potential conversive meaning is found in possibilities of giving up the "right answer," and of relinguishing knowledge as control (Schon, 1988, p. 22).

30. In research reported on their teacher education program, Zeichner and Liston (1987a, beginning p. 34) document the maintenance by students of the traditional meaning of teaching--implying the presence of spectatorial meaning constructs.

31. I use "transformational" to signify the-leaving-behind-in-remaking that is postmodernism. I think it incorporates the neo-Marxist, critical term "transformative," but more fully to connote the discourse of possibility that is recently significant in that project. See Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux (1985) on transformative teachers as well as Brodkey (1987). Harding's (1986) use of transformation comes from her observations about the altered human condition (especially for women) that is not a revision of the old order. She adds that transformational categories are "unstable" and rightly so (p. 244). Working from the epistemological split, I attempted a first approximation of transformational teaching in Stone, 1987.

32. Both Taylor and Rorty claim a theoretical continuity between their postmodern views and their respective "alternatives" to representational meaning. The former wants a "contemporary expressivism " (Taylor, 1985b, p. 247), and the latter desires an "edifying philosophy" (Rorty, 1979, p. 360). For both this is a rejection of the traditional meaning of meaning ~~and that~~ I thus take them as valuing "discontinuity." I note that Taylor uses the term "continuity-through-transformation" (1988, p. 483).

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33. Central to its "method" is criticism "that surfaces and evaluates that which...[analysis, interpretation and even conversation (my adaptation)] has omitted, suppressed, devalued, silenced, and opposed as well has what has been claimed, asserted...[expressed and said]" (Cherryholmes, 1988, p. 159).

34. Theoretical eclecticism and contradiction are appropriate for these models of practice given the complexity of the world of teaching. However, one would want harmony among concepts both in terms of methods practiced and of ethical consequences. Both Richert and Henderson attend to the ethical dimension of teaching. Given their reliance on Noddings' "caring," harmony must serve to maintain relation. Noddings (1984) does not locate her theory in postmodern discourse but its spirit is not incompatible.

35. None of this assessment is to imply negative criticism of the meanings of meaning found in these reflective theories. I emphasize that they (and the rest) have been used in the chapter because they are interesting models and because, to my mind, they are accomplishing their intention: to reform teaching through a broadened conception of traditional proposals for preservice and inservice teacher education.

36. In my preparation of this chapter, I want to thank Ralph Stueber for significant conversation and Cleo Cherryholmes for insight. Also both Tom Barone and Hunter McEwan made important contributions as did Mark Selman and Murray Ross in initial discussions.

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